IN VALES ~ ~ ~
OF HELIKON

FURMAN

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IN VALES OF HELIKON



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POEMS BY ✳ ✳ ✳ ✳

ALFRED ANTOINE FURMAN



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TO GEORGE THEODORE WELCH.

If we have borne the storm and stress of fate,
If we have seen our pristine sentiments
Droop in the air of action, time relents,
And brings a recompense to mitigate
His all too harsh decrees. That great estate
Our deputy in purple represents,
Unseen before the shepherds' wandering tents,
Looms in the mind by thought made desolate.
Here, in your conscript hours, forms you conjure
Love-lorn or fair, out of the mental urn,
That put on flesh and live;—an overture
To feasts of fancy; memories strange to burn
Into the brain. You, by this wand, allure
Heart-easing days; and I, perchance, may learn.

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IN VALES OF HELIKON.

I left my master Plato, and pursued
A solitary way. That liquid voice
Resounded in mine ears, as, far and wide,
I followed after those supernal forms
Which leaving, at his word, their native spheres,
Came to the earth, obeying. But, alone,
The ineffable spirits glided from my side,
Bearing the lamp of truth, by whose pale rays
He read the secrets of the universe.

Then all uncertain did I stay my foot,
Longing to follow, yet withheld by awe.
The while, at tension, marble to the core,
So still I stood, I heard the soft refrain
Of many a broken song, and caught the tones
Of the immortals in their mansions blest;

Thro which, methought, came glimpses of old days,
Processions stately, hallowed forms, and gods;
Graces and nymphs melodious—the muse
Majestic, but divinely sweet and rare.
Then all would vanish, echo die away
Into her shell; and the faint roar of men
Ravening at toil, with multitudinous cries,
Behind me deepening, seeming like the damned
Their throats in Hades straining,—smote my soul,
And stung me forward from ignoble days.
My robes I plucked about me: from the rim
That shuts the modern, like a prison wall;
From all his ramp and worry, and the coil
Of base ambitions ending in a round,—
I stepped at once into the antique world;
A mystic, rapt in deep romantic themes;
A wanderer over every land and sea.

Arose before me mountains capped with snow,
Red with the footsteps of the sun. Beyond,
A valley clothed in twilight vaguely ran.
Joyful, I entered. On a gentle mound
With verdure carpeted, and from the day
Guarded by leafy boughs, some columns leaned,

Ruined and lone. Hard by an altar stood
Mantled with vines, and with a truant ray,
As if the incense of the primal time
That felt and argued not, had been transmute,
By nature's alchemy, in stainless wreath
Of ever-during light,—an homage sad,
To burn perennial there. Upon its side
Lichens, air-fed, and mosses clad in green,
Inched o'er the tawny marble, gaping wide,
The porch of lizards slipping in and out,
And colored like the stone. And as I paused
To gaze in solemn silence on this scene
Of mournful beauty, 'neath the dropping pines
Appeared two forms. The elder one had scarce
Voyaged on waves of time to our best age;
His looks were grave as night, save when a flash,
Swift as the levin's bolt, shot from his eyes,
Like one in madness bound; which soon again
Grew soft and lambent as the evening star.
The other had not passed youth's golden gates;
A cloud of auburn locks fell on his head
In beautiful disorder; and a smile
Pleasant, but leagued, in sooth, with mockery
Lurked on his perfect lips. They, seeing me,

Stopped sudden. Back into the balsamy gloom
Faded the first; while to that crumbling shrine
Advanced the younger, bending on me looks
Of keenest scrutiny.

"Does poetry," he asked,
And on the sanctuary laid an olive spray,
"Still wander in the modern world, whose home
Was in the age of fable and belief?"

"Do we not love, do not the nations war?"
I answered, flurried by his railing tone.
"To grace these themes the muses bring to us
Laurel and palm. Knew you the better times?"

A shadow swept across his mobile face,
Retreating on the borders of a smile
Satiric, as in mellow voice he said:

"Volterra saw my birth when slavery's storm
Was beating on the land. The stoic tree
Sheltered my life, while with a trammeled pen
I lashed the follied age. That stream of verse
Which flowed from Homer's well, was drying up;

The night of tyranny closed on the world,
Choking the low melodious voice of art.
Do not believe the seeds of poesy
Break thro the soul to uncongenial air:
Shy are the muses, and they may not leave
Their haunts on Helikon at every call.
One poet in an age consoles my mind,
For nature is not prodigal with genius.
He is a legislator for the heart,
The image of his time. Read me the verse
Of any age, and I will copy you
Its manners, dogmas, laws and government.
Many there are who fancy they have wet
Their lips in Castaly: they but reveal
Some fleeting vanities that perish soon.
My times were so infested, and I made
My pen a thong of scorpions to chastise
The desecrators of a holy shrine.
Nor did I spare to ply my whip of scorn
On him who filled the throne, who in the hours
Borrowed from lust raised to the muse an eye.
Light press the earth on them invective-stung:
Death, early in a masterless disease,
Their foolish rage avenges."

He ended; I rejoined:
"Persius, I know thee now as one whose heart
Was kinder than his pen. I marvelled, too,
What would have been thy noon of art whose dawn
Poured such a piercing light. But may I hear
That joyless one who venerates the shades?"

Beneath a silver fir whose lateral boughs
Dropped heavy shadows, pale, in sadness deep
He stood; and on that face I questioned threw
Mysterious glances. Turning to me then,
Resumed melodious the satirist:

"Thy cleric dress, he says, a serious mind
Proclaims: so I may speak. The sisters three
Who wear the chaplets made of wool, with flowers
Of the Narcissus woven, and calmly keep
The archives of eternity, both loved
And hated him. When to the earth his soul
Traveled, arising from their nighted thrones,
They dipped it in the white and azure founts
Of truth and fancy; but their fatal shears
Cut soon his thread of life: by his own hand
Hurried to Charon's stream. I had bewailed

That wound, that eternal wound of love,
At many a studious banquet when his lines
Brilliant and deep, showed me the source of things,
And from the form of dead religion tore
Her splendid shroud. His reason doomed the soul
To pass in nothingness; to sink at last
In sea of matter, dragging to the ooze
Of cold oblivion all its gorgeous train
Of hate and passion, memory and hope.
When wretched man has clung to life, and planned
New troubles for himself beyond the skies,
The gift of endless sleep declining, often
He smiled, and wondered why. But his own soul
Had grown so rich and powerful by thought,
It might not drop in dissolution's jaws,
As others do; but ever wings its way,
Thro world on world, up to the seat of light."

When ceased the accents of that flagrant sadness,
From vortex of my new emotions, I
Rescued these words: "Lucretius is his name,
Who gave to nature, thro his postulate
Eternal atoms and the boundless void,
All power to carry out her ends. And nature wroth

His footfall sounded in her mystic halls,
And fearing that more secrets he betray,
Pressed him yet young against her marble breast."

Now parted us his voice within the wood,
Late found: "Thy vase of goodness overflows!"
That turned the gracious figure from my side
To his transcendent comrade in the glade.
I bent some lingering looks upon that table
Where still I saw the pile of votive wealth
Rise thro the clouds of incense; the Pythian heard
Pronounce, with sparkling eyes and hair on end,
In sulphur vapors, oracles divine.
Then as the sun between the olives shot
Vollies of crimson arrows, went my way.

There is an empery in solitude
The Roman never swayed. Assemble here
Demons or gods to scourge or elevate,
Depending on our lives. The jaded soul
Grown weary in the conflict with the world,
Stoops to this well, and rises up refreshed.
The guilty mind must murder memory,
Or ever be pursued by furies here.

Bear to this hospital thy wounded pride,
And here thy hurt will find a medicine.
When drops of loss fall in thy cup of life,
And bitter it, enter this holy land,
And comfort visits thee. Yet solitude,
That flight of the alone to the alone,
To them whose moods are docile to its sway,
Is like a haunt where congregate the best
Of all the ages; in the printed page
Living, tho dead, and feeding with their thoughts
The flame of art and knowledge on the earth.

I traveled on, elate. Before the fervors
That sparkled in the diamond of my youth,
By lapidary time were blurred and dimmed,
And graved with tears, these Pierian paths I trod;
But still they seemed untrod. At times I drew
Forth from my vest, with many a furtive glance,
An humble flute, and wound a plaintive strain
That vanity would whisper was a note
Such as the rightful dwellers in the vales
Parnassan soothed their hearts withal, when they
Heard from the summit faultless melodies.

By ilex and by pine, by silvery spring
That kissed with sweet, moist lips their rugged feet,
Thro rocky dells where lived all shrubs and plants
Innocuous, and where the tranquil light
Broidered with shade, hung like a cloth of gold
On this cathedral's walls, long wandering, lost
In deep delight, I came in turn to each
Famed tenant of this soil. There was a rill
That glided from a canopy of rock,
Its crystal tresses braiding, where I saw
One sitting on a stony couch festooned
With myrtle and with bays. Traversed his brow
The white lane of a scar; and at his feet
Lay symbols of his art. An ominous gaze
And friendly, but in sudden moments chased
By sorrow's wolves, emboldened me to say:

"The tragic muse who fled at my approach
But secret favors you, dropped in her haste
Dagger and crown; yet she has left, I think,
A votary—"

A melancholy smile
Loitered a moment on his countenance,

Such as the sun at close of wintry days,
Foundered in vermeil clouds, throws on the skies.

"I was a pioneer," he said in tones
Calmly defying grief. "I blazed a path
For the romantic drama thro the growth,
Noxious and rank, of medieval art.
I gave it form, and showed men as they are,
Cruel, ambitious, false, the winding-sheet
Of their humanities. Came to my hearth
A sovereign mind, and snatched from it a brand
To light the temple of his genius. I—
That lake of blood again! I see it still,
Dark, turbid, weltering, fed by springs of hate:
Its thick waves leap up to my mouth, and choke me.
'Tis nothing; let it pass!—My days, my nights
Knew well the haunts of vice; and dear I paid
For dragging in that mire the beauteous robes
Of my invention. By a wretched hand,
Before my fruit of fancy was a-ripe,
While in my brain rolled sunless seas of thought,
To fall on undreamed shores, and flash in verse,—
Was I laid low; my bill of life
By death receipted early."

I bowed my head,
Feeling grope in my breast the infinite pain
He could but half conceal, and low responded:

"Marlowe,
Your mighty line with wonder filled my mind
Whene'er I studied in that golden age
Whereof you were the herald; that rare time
Seen only twice before in this our world,
Which like an aloe blossomed but to die."

Now at this moment passed a pensive shade,
Paused, and returned to where that fountain gleamed
With weird and obscure light. Of middle size
Whose portliness made tryst with ease and grace;
An eye large, deep and luminous; a face
By misery pinched; and lips where hung a foam
His rounded chin distorting,—such was he,
Still young, but withered in misfortune's storms.
Flowed in full tide my curiosity,
And bade me question him. A dismal look
Was only thrown my words; then he resumed
His walk, and in the dimness disappeared.
Chagrin was on my features stamped; and I

Fain would have asked that other to appease
This hunger when I saw he, too, was gone.

I gazed around. Thro vistas shone the peaks
With snow tiaraed,—types of loneliness
In which the greatest dwell. These steeps of fame
Are chilling even when the world's applause
Comes up their sides resounding. Poisoned darts
Fly from an unseen cloud, and rankle there.
Frequent the singing robes are wet with tears.
In vain against the depressing bars of flesh
Beat the spirit's wings. Not till the eternal calm
From urn immutable, beyond the realm
Of change, beyond the scepter of decay
Which governs all in this our mortal state,—
Over the soul is flowing, is there peace.

As I fared on and upward, I perceived
A chasm, the mountain's jaws held wide apart
By viewless monsters, down which tripped and plunged
A limpid brook fed by the exhaustless snows.
Where jutted a peninsula of green
In that aerial bay, two forms uprose;
And drawing near, one I discerned was he

Some anger, to my grief, had driven away.
There on the ledge, he wiped his frothy lips
With amaranth dipped in the icy pool;
But ever leaped the white immortal spray
On that red bank. His tutelar, deep in age,
With locks blown white and thin by winds of time,
Skin creased and parched as some old document,
From bending over him, turned and exclaimed:

"Why, mortal, do you come to harass him
With vain enquiries, hating as he does
All your delusions? Listen, and depart!
He was condemned by nature to that life
Illusion-starred, wherein a mocking fate
Fixes a gulf between our hopes and lot
Wide as the grave. Better that he had been
A stabler, scullion, plowman, what you will,
Since these vocations bring, at any rate,
Bread, and a place at night to lay the head.
Then had he dwarfed and jailed his generous nature,
The mark of artist souls; closed friendship's purse;
And trained his character in worldly ways!
And so had found before the bar of time
Redress, and judgment ta'en for future peace

Against the league of chance. But such a life,
So deadly to the flowers of Otway's mind,
Was happily short—his only fortune there.
A gorgon breathed into his fiery veins,
As fatal as the serpent-circled head
Which, in the fabling days,
Turned into stone all those who on it gazed.
What do I say? It was starvation grim
That planted in his blood her hideous flag,
And recompensed his services to art."

His words at first pitched in a shrilly key,
Closed tremulous and slow, as when the winds
Battling all night with bands of centuried oaks,
Their warfare cease when dawn sedately leads
Her pageant up the east, and sink to rest.
I heard in silence, and in silence turned,
Departing. I had left the cheerful vales
Rapt and absorbed, and uplands trod of song,
By aspiration called and beckoned on
To airs beyond my breathing. As I stood
In doubtful musing, softly down the slope
Stole warbled notes in one clear strain to me.
In purest outline there the regal skies

Those hoary heights were shaping. Graceful rose,
Below the desolate ivory fields which frost
Sows on the summit, columns white as they,
Supporting a pavilion where the forms
Of airy creatures moved in mystic dance,
Ethereal, radiant and music-veiled.

SONG.

He leads no more the choric dance
Upon Parnassus side;
No more our woven footsteps glance,
In harmony and pride,
To that sweet lyre which he of yore
From the celestial mountains bore.

Tho years have past away
Since we did part,
Faithful to thee I stay,
Friend of my heart.

And now but burns a feeble flame
Caught from his glorious fire,
Which may, in age of lower aim,
Recall the matchless choir
That brought below the heavenly lore
Men may admire but not restore.

Tho fate may never give
Thy dear control,
Ever for thee I live,
Friend of my soul!

Came eve demure, and shut with dewy hands
The gates of day. Night followed at her heels,
Her swarthy children on her back. The stars,
Studding her purple baldric with their gems,
Dropped radiance down. I drank that lower air,
Not moulded to ascend the difficult ground
Where genius held her court. A simple song,
A vagrant verse accost on fancy's road,
Is all I know, and all I wish to know.
Beneath those doddered trees, a musing mood
Revealed the world of feeling which must make

Peace with that other world, since I have given
These strange iambics greeting. They have drawn
From serpent of my life its poisonous fangs;
And in the close and dungeon of the world
Companions been to me. Perchance they led
Friends to my side, in mirror of whose verse
I saw the forms of beauty, prized the thought
Whose plummet sounded in our human deeps,
With highest art contending. And if age
Shall drive into his fold my flock of years,
I deem this well, altho to others naught,
Or past observing, will refresh my days
With waters ever sweet; and spread the sward
And palms of bright imagination far
Amid the sands of this material time.



MORNING.

I saw the graceful figure of the morn
Come thro her amber gate;
And pausing timid on the airy lawn,
The golden car await.

Around, the dewy fragrance of the earth
My spirit bathed in joy,
As if I had received the purer birth
That time can not destroy.

From morning's smile and fair ambrosial hand
My nature drank new power;
Like Antaeus when he touched the strengthening land,
And knew his conquering hour.

O sacred morn! upon the mountain's brow
Pouring thine urn of light,
How beauteous art thou in my memory now
Beneath a starless night!

THE LOST ARCADIA.

The notes of Pan come floating down the hill
In silver melodies. Beside a tree
A dryad bends, and listens rapturously;
And where an oread stoops to sip a rill
That Alpheus feeds, those notes her bosom thrill.
Thro halls of perfume sings the pollened bee;
Down in the fragrant meadows lazily
The sacred sheep and oxen take their fill.
O days of youth that time has ravined down!
O fond illusions that persuaded still
Life is a pleasant business, not an ill!
To stricter school we go; beneath the frown
Of science sit, constraining to depart
Fancies that once beguiled the mind and heart.

CHATTERTON.

The fatal wreath of genius was entwined
Around thy brain. It drove thee forth to seek
A fame and fortune on the rough and bleak
Mountains of life, pursuing forms that wind
From haunts of fancy to the ardent mind;
While on the antique muse thy heart did wreak
Itself absorbing, like the vulture's beak
Deep in the Titan's breast—of course to find
No recompense on earth. Starvation crept
With eyeless hate in chambers of thy blood;
And pride went hand in hand to nip the bud
Of charity, ere love thy lot had wept;
Or from thy lip the poison wiped away
That curtained up at morn thy radiant day.

A BANK OF VIOLETS.

I found you o'er the brooklet peeping
Demure in purple vest,
While yet your laggard peers were sleeping
Calmly in nature's breast.

As soon as spring, from winter fleeing,
Had passed across the land,
You shyly came, scant welcome seeing,
A gentle, lovely band.

And fancied I the sky was lending
A fragment of its blue,
As o'er your bed of moisture bending
Such beauty met my view.

BEREAVEMENT.

Its shadow falls across my heart
Whatever way I go,—
In silent study, noisy mart,
Or where still waters flow.

Aye rises from the grassy mound
The form I loved so well;
And comes, whatever scenes surround,
Within my soul to dwell.

I never ask that time may cure
This wound, or bring relief:
I wish to keep that memory pure
In deep eternal grief.

OTHO.

❧ ❧

Martial. I think of him
As minister to every vice.
Statius. So to the world he seemed,
But thro his mind a vein of greatness ran.
Martial. Truly he was a son
Of these degenerate days. For Nero's sake
He pawned his ancient name to infamy.
Galba had favored him; and even now
To sup with father Dis has Galba gone.
Statius. How could he always hear
The voice of virtue on his sworded throne!
He was a man as various as the world,
Versed in all ways, stoic and lover too.
The Gracchi's spirit lived again in him
Who threw away his empire and his life,
To give the nation peace.

Martial. He cast a wondrous spell on you!

Statius. He was that rarest bird—a friend;
And tho I blame the conduct of his youth,
His end was noble in mine eyes.

Martial. Rumors we heard of that,
Ascribed to his despair.

Statius. He sought to keep his mind
Above his fortunes. All that day he sat
Nervous and taciturn within the gates.
As evening fell, and shafts of crimson light
Transfixed the somber pines, and trembling hung
On Adda's chilly stream, he could no more
Abide the dread suspense. Then sharply rose
Cries on the air, and tramp of hurrying feet.
He passed without. Enveloped in white dust,
A crowd of fugitives poured in the town;
Wounded and faint, and on their ashen cheeks
Fear sitting; dying, yet their zeal for him
Deathless. Cold was his glance; and on his face
Grief for their flight.
The legionaries groveled at his feet;
They kissed his hands; called him their Imperator,
Alone worthy to reign; and begged him not
Forsake them now.

Martial. This am I glad to hear,
And pay to it the tribute of a tear:
Him had I buried in unhallowed sod,
But now I praise him as a god.

Statius. Well, dip this blossom of the heart
In wine of epigram. Yet hark the rest;
And it may from your stilus wipe
Its crust of raillery.
So was he loved, one plunged in his own side
The fatal steel; and sprinkled Otho's hand
With his heart's dew. A momentary glow
Flashed in the Emperor's breast. Then he whose life
Had often wandered in the paths of shame,
Earning the anger of the sun-housed gods,
And hate of pious men, a counsel plucked
From the deep bosom of nobility.
He gazed around, and said in voice unshaken:
"To thrust into the jaws of war again
A spirit such as yours, puts on my life
Too high a price. The more you flush with hope
The future years, if I should choose to live,
More glorious still will be my death. For now
Fortune and I each other truly know.
If I threw off the yoke of moderation,

Call it the curse of quick prosperity.
Vitellius began the civil war:
To bandage up with peace our country's wounds,
Belongs to me. And do not think I need
Revenge or consolation. Longer time
Others have sat upon the blood-stained throne;
But none has laid, with fortitude like mine,
The scepter down. To Pluto's sunless halls
Travels with me this thought, that you would die
For Otho willingly. I counsel you:
Bear with the world, and drain your glass of life.
To say too much about one's end I hold
A mark of cowardice. Take as a proof
Of my resolve, that I complain of none:
Accusing gods or men is but for him
Afraid to die."

Martial. Those sentiments
I have not read in Epikurus' creed.

Statius. His words, in their charmed minds,
Dilated him to stature of the gods.
His person, unacquainted with a grace,
Vied with Apollo when he drives his steeds
Thro gates of orient pearl. They turned away,
Laden with sorrow. Otho, firm, serene,

Who could command the arms of twenty legions,
But bowing proudly to the will of fate,
Drowned silently in sleep his host of cares.
When slowly in the east the pilgrim day
Climbed up the sky, he rose with tranquil mien,
Examined carefully two weapons there,
And with unfaltering hand baring his breast,
Fell on his sword. Some kneeled, and kissed his wound;
Some clasped his arm; and others threw themselves
Prone on the ground, and him adored as one
Passed into deity,—nay, hacked their forms,
To follow him, in pieces on his bier.
And Plotius wept, and heaped on his gray head
Ashes; and wise Paulinus said: "He chose
The nobler part, and now is with the dead."
May not this end, in minds of highest thinking,
Grant amnesty—
Martial. Requiescat in pace!
The day for man most truly fortunate,
Is when they lay him in the tomb.

THE TABLES TURNED.

Love in his bower lay fast asleep.
I grimly said: "Now will I creep
Behind that bank of flowers, and steal
The arrows that such misery deal
To heart of man, and them destroy,
That never more so sweet annoy
Perplex our life." With trembling pace,
Parting the vines that interlace
His pleasant bed, I neared the god;
When lo! up from the fragrant sod
He sprang, and laughter in his eyes
Flowing, in mock alarm he cries:
"Nearer to death I never came!"
Then to his cheek a shaft of flame
He drew, and in my breast it sped:
I who had thought revolt to head,
Am now in gentle bondage led.

ROBESPIERRE.

Intolerant of life, her blind command
You yet too well obeyed. Deeply the air
Was loaded with the accents of despair:
The people saw that dagger in your hand
Dilated to a huge supernal brand
To lop all human heads: and the ancient heir
Of misery smiled, for that the ghastly fare
Of hate and fear was spread upon the land.
Yet other were you bred! Steeped was your youth
In fount of fairest lore; humanity
Sat with you on the bench; the face of truth
And wisdom shone thro glass of penury;
And pressed your mind to the Utopian isles
Upon whose citizens perfection smiles.



BELISARIUS.

'Twas in your dreams a monarch would repay
Such services! Load you he could with chains;
Drinking his sycophants' empoisoned strains
That doomed you in a noisome cell decay.
Now let his arm avail to keep at bay
The hordes of Vandals from the Dacian plains;
And close the reeking mouth of war that drains
His subjects' blood—if he can learn the way.
Tho chained, be chainless in the thoughts that feed
Upon your heroic past; your victor sword
That carved out empire for a faithless lord;
The kings you led in triumph; and the meed
Of purer glory that could only frown
On them who offered scepter and a crown.

THE SEA GULL.

I saw thee cleaving thro that crystal tide
The sun pours on the sea;
With wing undrooping o'er the waters wide,
In lonely liberty.

Far from that icy nest, thy place of birth,
Where screamed thy hungry brood,
On tameless pinions rovest thou the earth—
A guest of solitude.

Or, comrade of the tempest, in thy heart
What solemn joys abide,
When riven are the clouds, and lightnings dart
Flame arrows by thy side.

Amid the storm thy voice arises high,
Unterrified and free,
As if the genius of the frenzied sky
An organ found in thee.

But when the anger of the homeless wave
Is soothed by touch of light,
Thou gently ridest on that tempest's grave,
Like some aerial sprite.

Or some cold spirit of the vasty deep
Come to the upper air,
Escaped those halls where shapeless monsters keep
Watch o'er the Nereids fair.

A CITIZEN OF THE WORLD.

His nation's borders do not trace
A line of hatred for the race;
His franchised heart o'erleaps the sea
In tempered praise and sympathy.

A priestly dogma can not blind
To native worth his tolerant mind:
He deems religions spring from seeds
Of human character and needs.

His hope it is to see unfurled
The flag of justice in the world;
The blossoms of the social tree
Bear fruitage of equality.

Of manners strange he is the guest;
Takes every custom to his breast;
In peasant's hut or prince's hall,
He calmly meets occasion's call.

It is his faculty to live
Days active or contemplative,—
In shadow of a throne, or where
Another yoke the people bear.

His sense of liberty deplores
A wreck of natural rights on shores
Of tyranny; yet knows the chains
Will fall when the oppressed ordains.

He can not teach his lips to praise
Laws that the eye of freedom glaze;
But standing on some mount of time
Discerns beyond an age sublime;

An age in which the earth may shine
With glories thought before divine;
Careless if man this pledge redeem,
Or it remain a noble dream.

THE MARCH WOODS.

When sunny days have torn the bitter rime
From winter's beard, pleasant it is to seek
The gray March woods. Falls from the paly sky
A cold light which clasps on the trees' bare boughs
Bracelets of gold. Not yet the caltha buds,
In yellow hoods, bend laughing o'er the brook;
Nor could the red man find a frail blood-root
To stain his cheeks for war. But hallowed here
To a dear past that in my house of dreams
Forever dwells, the silence and the gloom
Invite my steps. Hard by a rivulet
The diffident ferns part, with dark green fronds,
A roof of withered leaves, and drink the light.
Squadrons of rank cord grass clamber on bogs,
And point their emerald spears as to defend
Some fairy of the glen. There creeps the moss,

A brother to the rock, where dampness bides;
Or gently binds upon the oak's strong feet
Sandals of green. A fatuous butterfly,
His purple wings mottled and trimmed with silver,
Flutters from tuft to tuft, and woos the sun.
A blue bird nestles on an ashen branch,
Mute since the dawn; or down a shaft of light
Swift slides, to seize a beetle refugee
From his old home of night. I see the fields,
Thro chestnut corridors, stretch, clad in brown,
And turn my footsteps back. But well I know
The keen intrepid marshal of the storm
Will ride, with winter's warrant, thro the sky,
And of these genial days make bold arrest;
And bail his surly minions out again.

KARNAK.

There was a glory once upon her brow,
The light of art and arms, when sceptered kings
Turned thro her hundred gates the golden springs
Of half the east. Went up the pious vow

In temples whose dimensions might compare
With nature's work. The marble soared above
In sculptured obelisk; or calmly strove
In sphinx the genius of the world to snare.

And myriads there her market place would call;
And commerce came and built her peaceful throne;
And wealth spoke in her proud imperious tone;
And grandeur threw her purple gleam o'er all.

Now strays the moonlight solemnly and slow
Along her aisles of ruin. Solitude
Is startled only by the prowling, rude
Hyena to whose fiendish laugh the low

Arches surrender up a querulous band
Of echoes in some viewless prison pent;
While endlessly o'er cornice, pediment
And fallen column flow the seas of sand.



THE YOUNG MAGICIAN.

Echo, heart free, no lock put on her tongue;
Fled quietude, and silence gave a groan:
But when into her breast love's flames were flung,
She pined away, and clad her voice in stone.

THE GREAT LEVELLER.



Pride, turn thou up the ashes of the grave
Where high and low the debt to nature pay,
And show me there the difference in the clay
That once had clothed the monarch and the slave.



THE SUICIDE.

With face in pallor framed the sufferer lay.
The xanthous locks strayed on his dampening brow,
And hid the wound thro which the spirit's prow
Steered into unknown seas. Light of a day
Faith prophesies, had paled and gloomed away
From those sad traits, if this contempt allow
Such dwelling there, o'er whose decay the bough
Of coldness shall forever bend and sway.
Why creeps a tremor round my heart for him
Whose bark of life was wrecked upon despair?
Few were his years; yet even to the brim
They filled his cup of misery, loss and care,
Until he summoned peace. Now, never more
Shall tides of grief beat on his mortal shore.



CLAUDIAN.

Shorn were the tresses of the Roman sun
That lit the world, by the Barbarian night;
Her line of generals, artists, men of might,
Gnawed by decay; a web of dullness spun
In palace of the mind; the state undone
By civil rage, despair, corruption's blight,
And all the birds of weakness that alight
On fields of life when evil's bands have won.
In this arena you undaunted sprung,
By genius armed alone; and rolled the tide
Of thirty decades back, to show how sung
The epic masters from their place of pride;
Shedding on art that bound in darkness lay,
A glimmer of the rare Virgilian day.

THE LOCOMOTIVE.



With gleaming flag of lurid red,
He charges thro the vale;
And trembles earth beneath that tread
Cased in such iron mail:
His course no mighty rivers stop;
No arm of sea; no mountain top.

Thro regiments of steely rain,
Thro ranks of blinding snow,
He dauntless bears his winding train,
With primal heart a-glow;
And motion graceful as the dance
Of planets in the starred expanse.

In smoke he robes his giant form,
And screeches loud and shrill;
And under vengeful sun and storm,
Pursues his journey still;
The while his thews and muscles gain
New vigor from the mortal strain.

All thro the night with clang and roar,
He travels on his way:
The winged steed on Grecian shore
No swifter course could lay;
Nor be, when thousand miles are past,
Unwearied as the viewless blast.

The tongue of fable has not told
What here in fact we see,—
A genuine power that mocks the old
Bewailed divinity:
Yet shall this power be overthrown,
And still a greater rule alone.

A RED CHIEFTAIN.

They fought like tigers when their blood
Famine invades; like brave men, when the foe,
With cruel hands, pollutes their native land.
The battle raged soon as the sun's red face
Peered o'er Virginia's hills, until it sank,
On that October day, wearied, aghast,
Into Ohio's stream. And Logan's voice
Arose above the tempest of the strife:

"Be strong, my warriors! Let no weakness live
Around your hearts! The Long Knives drenched with rum
Your brothers' brains; then sowed a crop of steel,
To break the peace, on their defenceless forms.
Let none escape! Give—give them all to death,
That so your deeds may ransom back again
Justice upon the earth; and you may bear

Back to your forest towns, and to your squaws,
In answer thronging to your scalp halloo,
The pledges of the slain."

The brave Cayuga struck
A pale-face down, and garnered in his belt
The reeking scalp; and in the brain of one
Who turned to flee, planted his tomahawk.
But all in vain; for fate around his band
Coils of destruction wove, and Dunmore's plans
Conversed with victory.

Deep in the forest sat the Chief.
Over his head a canopy of gold
The maples spread; and from a mossy rock
A silver rivulet trickling, gleamed and ran
Babbling before his feet. He scorned to meet
The whites in council; but their messenger
Awaited at his side to know his will.
The eagle's plume that drooped on his shaved head,
An errant ball had cut in twain. The paint
That pictured in dull hues, on face and chest,
The story of his wrongs, was blurred and streaked
By deeper tides than tears. In silence long

He sat, while tossed his mind on memory's seas;
Then lifting up his eyes, like smouldering coals,
In guttural tones he said:

"Can any pale-face say
Hungry he entered Logan's lodge, and he
Gave him not meat; or if he came to him
Naked and cold, and Logan clothed him not?
When Pontiac's thirst for war brought to an end
The quiet days, sat Logan in his wigwam,
An advocate of peace. Such was my love
For them unworthy, grieved my tribe would say,
As I passed by, 'See there the white man's friend!'
I even thought to go and dwell with you,
When Cresap in cold blood, and unprovoked,
Murdered the family of Logan, all,
Women and children, hurling in the grave:
There runs no drop of the Cayuga's blood
In any living veins. This called on me
For terrible revenge—nor called in vain!
On countless lives I threw the noose of death,
My vengeance glutting! Now the beams of peace
I welcome for my country. Yet do not
Harbor the thought mine is the joy of fear.

Fear Logan never felt. To save his life,
Pale-face, he would not turn him on his heel.
For Logan, who is there to mourn? Not one!"

Upon the air his mournful accents died.
From the dim woods, the shades crept out and stole
Up to the sky. The stars with golden feet
Stepped, one by one, forth on that purple floor.
And the chill dews dropped from their crystal home,
A cloak of vapor to wrap up the form
Of the bronzed chieftain where, thro the long night,
Companioned by despair, rock-like he crouched
In silent grief.

* *

THE HOME OF GOD.

Ben Ali sought for God on sea and land;
In dawns where, on the elysian fields of light,
Day's champion struggles with the dragon night,
And drenches with his blood the hyaline strand;
In the oases where the brow is fanned,
The lips refreshed, as death begins to write
His codicil on the heart; in storms that smite
The unflinching earth: all this was nature's hand.
Then the Arabian paused, and looked within,
Looked on that battle plain where met in strife
Armies unseen, where stretched the form of sin
Mangled and dying; and his perfect life,
The home of justice, made him now aware
His quest was ended, since he found Him there.

THE MAJESTY OF DEATH.

In life his features wore a callous, shrewd
Expression, born and bred of love of gold.
Crawled to his lips a sneer that oft unrolled
Upon the ear a phrase contemptuous, rude,
When patient faith for charity has sued.
In circle of his eye a season cold
Had ever reigned; the passion that had sold
Humanity, kept it in servitude.
But when the fatal hand of death was laid
Soft on his brow, it wrought what wondrous change!
Vice and its cohorts raised their long blockade;
Nobility unwonted came to range
On that sad plain: the mortal plant decayed,
Budded a spirit flower, pale, solemn, strange.

THE RELEASED CONVICT.

The prison doors closed on him in his youth
When tides of hope ran high;
They opened when he scorned both men and truth,
With cold malignant eye.

Behind his grated window sprang to view
The ravaged face of hate—
Despair—and all that gloomy retinue
Which crowds misfortune's gate.

He felt within his breast the brand of wrong
Burn deep and deeper still;
While unavailing rage, with scorpion thong,
Beat down his feeble will.

A flock of curses lit upon his tongue
To vent his bootless grief;
His heart, by agony and sorrow wrung,
In hatred found relief.

With leaden step marched on the bitter years,
And set him free again;
Yet he, an outcast in this world of tears,
Would longer wear the chain.

He hated men, and spurned at gracious ways;
Forgot the name of God;
Mocked law, nor dreaded if his latter days
Should feel her chastening rod.



APRIL.

Now, rest, fair harbinger of May!
Dies out the winter's cry.
Dream on this bank where sunbeams play;
And pales yon cloud-swept sky.

Pursuit of March no longer fear—
His steps have gone astray:
For thee the brook runs pure and clear;
The bird sings on the spray.

The patient earth is roused at last,
And breaks the chain of sleep,
To hear thy heart beat wild and fast—
To feel thy pulses leap.

Thy tears have robed the grass in green;
Thy breath has waked the flowers;
And falls a gleam of days serene
Amid these leafing bowers.

THE DAWN MAIDEN.

On amber couch the maid of dawn
In gentle slumber lay,
When on his golden chariot borne
Drove up the god of day.

He saw, and loved the maiden bright,
And stretched his arms in love:
She, waking, fled his throne of light,
To realms of blue above.

Long time he sent his vassal rays
The darkness to invade;
And there where evening slowly strays,
They found the lovely maid.

Her brow gleamed with a tranquil star
That multiplied her charms;
And, bending from his blazing car,
The day leaped in her arms.

A SUNSET ON THE SEA.

The sun, a crimson shield, dropped down the west,
And thro a golden haze, flashed on the sea
A lane of rosy beams. Each billow's crest
Flaming with aerial rubies, modestly
Stooped to a brother wave, and smoothed its brow;
Until the waters, iris-hued, displayed
Such mirror opaline you might avow
The fancy—heaven in arms of ocean laid.
On a cloud isle, some wreck of fairy land,
Some blest abode where love might raise his throne,
Rippled the fading rays. Slowly the night
In violet cloak came on, studding her zone
With silver stars; and on the pearly strand
Of parting day, setting a vase of light.

THE CHALDEAN PLAINS.

Here nature scattered wealth with lavish hand;
And from the bosom of darkness constant drew
Horns of fertility. The retinue
Of greatness followed,—cities on the strand
That noble rivers washed; arts to disband
The troops of savagery. The softest blue
Dwelt in their sky; and on the mountains grew
Colors that wrapt in mystery stream and land.
Dead is their empire; but a spirit born
Within those fastnesses, has wandered wide,
The wrecks of time surviving. The forlorn,
Those that in halls of lowliness abide,
Have hailed it as the Persian hails the morn
When o'er the hills her crimson banners ride.

THE EAGLE.

No crowded streets with hum of life;
No human haunts where vice is rife;
No vulgar pomp of tyranny,—
Are liege to thee!

To stand in frown of so much ill,
Thy fretful spirit quick would kill,
Thou comrade of the earnest night,
The priest of light!

There, visions entertain thine eye
Made guest of beauty,—earth, and sky,
And loneliness that doth parole
A noble soul.

Larks follow spring. The swallow dwells
Footman to summer. Thy heart swells
To war with nature, make thy prey
The steeds of day.

Drink only blood. Thy feeble breed
Fling from the nest. Yet Ganymede
Shall praise thee on Olympian snow,
And I below.



THE OLD YEAR.

Go, wander with thy pack of ills
Upon oblivion's shore;
Bent double with the grief that kills,
The thoughts that death adore.

Day ever flees the arms of night;
And time our purpose jeers:
The year that came with promise bright,
A perjurer disappears.

I turn me to thy smiling heir,
As once I turned to thee,
For days that shall the soul declare
In peace and liberty.

And I will crown him in my heart
With diadem of truth;
Since hope has quaffed, despite thine art,
The fount of endless youth.

LORELLA.

She is a queen upon a throne
Not made by human hands;
She conquers by a smile alone,
And by a glance commands;
And all the tribute of my soul
Is laid upon her shrine,
While bending to a new control
I grow, like her, divine.

I may not ask her heart to give
What mine has given her:
Enough it is that I may live
Her beauty's pensioner;
May gaze upon her spotless brow,
And in her glorious eyes;
And deem that fortune grants me now
A glimpse of paradise.

THE FIELDS OF ASPHODEL.

I trod the joyless land;
I saw the hopeless shades;
I felt the stern, the iron hand
No human heart evades:
I heard the souls that roam,
Beneath a solemn spell,—
Still conscious of their earthly home—
In fields of asphodel.

No golden light of day
Falls on these meadows green;
No star, the realms of night to sway,
On ruby throne is seen;
No smiles, no looks that chid
The fates which domineer,
No hope that comes to men unbid,
Visit the dweller here.

But here to grief succeeds
An age of mournful calm,
And breathes an air across these meads
That brings the spirit balm,—
Such peace in mortal hours
The mind had never known,
Which grows while grow those sacred flowers
By tender memories sown.



ARIADNE.

I look upon the sea, the treacherous sea,
But deem its breast is innocent and free
Compared with man's.

O Aegean wave!
Whose azure feet dance on the shore and lave
The sullen rocks and blinking sands with foam,
Within thy liquid mansions is no home
For her who loved not wisely, but too well!

Naxos! believed a heaven and found a hell,
On whose proud hills with vines and olives crowned,
The Bacchic train leaped to the tabors' sound,
In flush of happiness with Theseus trod,
Fancied in honor equal to a god,—
A sty of horror art thou now to me,

A refuge of all lies and perfidy,
Wherein I stagger with a blind despair,
And love and life forswear.

The lightning blast these hoary oaks and pines;
In myriad pieces splinter all the shrines
Where sacrifices man! A pestilence
Tread with red foot, and burn his every sense,
Till he shall feel within his heart of hearts,
Tenfold the pain that thro my bosom darts!
Then sink this isle beneath the restless wave,
And bury love and me in one wide grave!



THE BURNING THRONE.



What tho he now possessed a separate throne
Cushioned and draped with fire; and the new world
In which he was sole king, had seen unfurled
The grisly flag of death; and wail and moan
Made music to all ears, except his own?
Even the spirits downward with him hurled,
Contented walked those mystic halls impearled
With hopeless tears, while he remained alone!
He was but lord of half the universe,
The part of darkness; while in realms of light
His great antagonist pronounced the curse
Of banishment. And ever, in despite,
He dreams, with sleepless eyes, to reimburse
His fortunes—be supreme by fraud or might.



AUGUST.

Methinks a matron crowned with fruits and flowers
Is latching summer's gate. Thy golden hair
Streams to the earth; thine eyes glance soft as rare
Sapphires that gleam in Ceylon tides. The towers
Of snowy clouds in which the radiant hours
Wait for the night, are fillets thou dost wear
Around thy brow; while deep thine ankles bare
Stand in the corn, and in the purpling bowers.
Thy days are so serene that autumn makes
Reprisals for his own. Before thy glass
He bids the eldest of his months to pass,
And robe her like to thee,—with crystal lakes
Of azure in her sky, and amber light
Like sunset rolls upon the coast of night.

ANDRONIKUS.

Around the human tigers stood,
Their eyes ablaze with hate:
To tear his heart—to lap his blood—
With snarling lips they wait.

They ravished out his teeth and hair,
Wrenched off a hand—an eye;
Then hung him by the feet in air,
While curses drowned his cry.

His parching throat this hour of need
Uttered one humble word:
"Why will ye bruise a broken reed?
Have mercy on me, Lord!"

A bloody mist crept o'er his brain,
A torment rived his heart;
Till pain was subjugate by pain,
Falling by its own dart.

The prison, throne and army now
In shadows fade away;
A hueless dampness streaks that brow
Where beauty held her sway.

The queens who laid their innocence
On altar of his love,
Flicker before his wildered sense,
Beneath, around, above.

His glazing eye turned on the crowd,
Mute asks some friendly hand
To send his spirit still unbowed,
Back to its native land.

That mournful glance plunged in his side
A soldier's generous sword,
Who, 'mong the faithless, did abide
Still faithful to his lord.

BRITOMARTE.



The bosky wilds; the solitude
With trifles waging endless feud;
The haunts of darkness; liberty,
Enamored thee.

The breast of snow where Dian held
Young purity, thine own excelled:
Love, scorned and famished, did depart
Thy marble heart.

That cup of beauty do not quaff,
O Kretan king! The epitaph
Of all thy gladness she will write,
In thy despite.

She is no maid of mortal mould,
But one unfeminine and cold;
A sprite or lamia who will spurn
Thine art to learn.

No dawn, calm chamberlain of day;
Nor purple sea; nor thine array
Of duties to the shades below,
May balm bestow.

Her pallid face, her dripping hair,
Shall make thee prisoner of despair;
And every jury of the years
Condemn to tears.



THE CAVE DWELLERS.

Folded in gloom they crouched and munched a bone;
Or tore apart the quivering limbs of deer
To drink their blood. The club, the flinted spear,
Leaned by the cavern wall; and in the lone
Watches of night, the rain's unloosened zone
Their rocky bed was flooding. Smote their ear
The forest cries, their brown cheeks paled with fear;
And in their door they rolled the massive stone.
Yet in this soil the seed of art and law
Fell from an unseen hand. These soulless ways
Were paths that led to lives of halcyon days;
And as by progress slow the mask of war
Was drawn away, man, by a strange device
Worshiped the past and called it paradise.

THE DORIAN LINE.

Let not the eager vanities betray
Thy dedicated life; feed thou thine art,
In compensation, to thy famished heart
Which sentiment and passion make their prey.
He dies to fame, who bows him to the sway
Of fashionable days; he mounts the cart
For a new guillotine, who seeks a part
Upon that stage where men their pride display.
Listen, betimes, and hear the Dorian line
In solemn grandeur rolling! Freedom, here;
Beauty for which the generous soul will pine;
And hopes that can the mind despondent cheer,
Despite of human baseness;—all are thine
To indemnify thy birth on such a sphere.

CUBA.



The despot's hand is on thy throat,
His dagger at thy breast;
And in thine ear his savage note,
To yield—or take thy rest!

Was it for this our fathers found
A home beyond the sea,
Where they on whom the tyrants frowned
Might dwell in liberty?

Has so much blood been shed in vain—
Set free so many slaves—
Thy right must now be taught to Spain
Upon her children's graves?

In blinded passion let her rage,
And clank thy broken chain:
Thou canst not, with such heritage,
Put on that yoke again.

Blood can not quench the holy fire
That burns within thy soul;
But higher shall it flame, and higher,
Till thou reach freedom's goal.

Then falter not! And let thy blows,
Sad isle, fall swift and strong;
Till everywhere thine ancient foes
Lie buried with their wrong.

1895.



A SLAVE OF PLEASURE.

Her brow is fair as in the days
Played on it rays of innocence;
Her lips the witching smile frequents
With which the debt of love she pays.

She lives beneath the blaze that flares
From gilded domes in midnight hours;
And recklessly the subtle powers
That lurk in wine, confronts and dares.

Insouciant and gay, her tongue
Forbids her memory dark to go
Back to her past; an endless flow
Of banter keeps her spirits young.

She wins the cold with pleasing wit,
Or fascinates with repartee:
I furl my sorrow's sail on lee
Of wonder—to her spells submit.

What is that harshness in her tone,
That sudden boldness in her eye,
Which ne'er before could I descry,
And tells her finest charm is flown?

Ah! in that eye the maiden light
Is troubled by a viewless cloud;
In lonely hours her head is bowed,
And sinks her soul in seas of night.

The light that from the altar fell
Her veil of passion turned to gloom;
But proud she walks the path of doom,
And careless goes with grief to dwell.

WASHINGTON.

We may not say that all the virtues dwelt
In thy great soul—human it was, and bowed
To stately faults, living above the crowd
Whose hearts at warm affection's altar knelt.
Yet in that cloud was nurtured the complete
And perfect will no storms of danger bent;
When confidence was fled, still confident;
Drinking the bitter chalice of defeat,
And still achieving. Nations may worship them
Who stride to glory over human graves:
Be our praise thou who put a scepter by,
Choosing to wear the nobler diadem
Of worth, for buffeting oppression's waves,
And adding one great star to freedom's sky.

THE SEA OF DARKNESS.

Broods over it the gloom of endless night;
And wander there, with sad, mysterious sound,
Winds from the outer realm. The cureless wound
Of desolation bleeds upon the white
Sands peering o'er the waves, with aconite
And mandragora drooping on the ground;
Or monstrous heads stretch from the depths profound
Unvisited by sun, or petrels' flight.
Here no sail comes, and passes safely by;
No prow this ocean ploughs, by human hands
Fashioned and steered. The cloudless ebon sky
Is rent an instant; angry, sulphurous brands
Descend, destroying; while, in quick reply,
The billow opens, and its prey demands.

ARMENIA.

And here where first the saving cross
Was lifted to a nation's gaze,
The Sultan tramples on her corse,
And smiles that Christ his faith betrays!

The Tigris, the Euphrates stream,
The rock-bound Van, the Khabodan,
Flashed back the deadly lances gleam,
And dyed with blood of martyrs ran.

That Moslem spear, that Moslem sword
Which broke against the Pyrenees,
Are burnished by the lives that poured
To seal a bigot's dark decrees.

From Caspian wave to Kurdistan
The mountain's breath is freedom's home
No more: the laws of Islam ban
Her feet upon that soil to roam.

And idly by the nations stand,
Nor seek to cleanse that reeky den:
We live beneath a new command,
We see the age of sordid men.

OLYMPIAN DAYS.

When Hercules, admitted to his rest,
Slighted the deity of wealth, and lived
In that eternal spring, that cloudless clime,
As he were not, among the sacred host
Amazement ran; and Jupiter exclaimed,
His cypress scepter shaking:

"My Theban, what is this! Not only strength
And beauty must be worshiped, but the wand
That charms the ugly beast of poverty,
Be dedicate in temple of the mind."

And then, uprising from his ivory throne,
He said in kinder tone:

"If he, with hand capricious, pour on men

A golden rain, consider he is blind;
And even so lame he can not overtake
The foot of merit. Yet a recompense
Hides in those restless wings that bear away
Riches more rapid than they come."

He sat him down,
And stroked his eagle's head. Smiling replied
The strong of arm:

"O Father, be it so!
But I have seen so often on the earth
That god with rascals going arm in arm,
I feared to soil the gloss of my new life
Addressing him in heaven."

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THE SOLDIER'S GRAVE.

The rays of peace fall on the land—
The land for which you died;
And where your life flowed in the sand,
Rivers of verdure glide:
And tho your form fades into dust,
Obeying time's decree,
Our memory fondly holds in trust
Your valor's legacy.

We see your battle fields again;
We hear the cannon's roar;
While half those serried ranks of men
Sink down to rise no more;
Or, spite of mercy's anguished calls,
Paled on the bayonet;
Or, 'neath the dungeon's fatal walls,
In death their ills forget.

Your part is done. 'Tis ours to bring
A chaplet to your grave;
A word to speak, a song to sing,
That tell how died the brave;
Whose deeds on scroll of fame are spread,
And graved on honor's urn;
While round the campment of the dead
The fires of glory burn.



SAINT BERNARD.

Nay, do not pray that I may live—
Pray rather that I go!
The earth has nothing more to give
When lies the spirit low—
Except a grave within her breast,
Where one may drink his fill of rest.

Bear witness, Christ, my love for thee;
How I have borne thy cross;
And drained the dregs of poverty;
And counted sleep a loss,
So I might spread thy gracious name—
Thy kingdom to the world proclaim!

I was not in the purple born,
Nor taught to wield the sword;
But I a cloak of power have worn
That few who called them lord
Have ever worn,—a spiritual power
Kings envied in their proudest hour.

My mandate filled the Roman throne;
I silenced keen Abelard;
And kings hung on my will alone
The scales of peace and war;
And more, I preached the great crusade
That Europe 'gainst the Turk arrayed.

How often have the worldly sires
Their children hid away,
That thro religion's purging fires,
My tongue has led to day!
But now that tongue is moved by breath
Lent only by the victor death.

Dear friends! my sands of life are run;
The grave is made for me:
The web that earth and time had spun
Torn by eternity!
My work is done. With willing heart
Unto my Master I depart.

LAW.



Your hand has led, with faltering steps and slow,
Man from the forest, the desert and the cave.
Your face so stern, so pitiless and grave,
Within his breast has wakened streams that flow
O'er beds of violence. The cities grow
On that land where your peaceful banners wave;
And wealth is harvested where man was slave
To poverty, or laid the weaker low.
Now you are shrined in temple of the mind,
Let all your oracles to justice pay
A fitting tribute, that the scorners find
No blemish on the ermine of your sway;
Nor show the people in their passion blind,
Beneath your golden vestments feet of clay.



SPAIN.

In caverns of decay she dwells, mid bones
Of peoples she has slain. Her hands are red
With innocent blood; her tiger soul is fed,
As death diseases feed, by Cuba's groans.
They ask for freedom's bread. She gives them stones;
And threatens to wave her scepter o'er the dead,
Ere she will shorten by a single shred
That cloak of tyranny the age disowns.
And there is one in apathy sits by,
Who clothed in power could make her will a law;
Or turns upon this woe a callous eye,
And bends the shrine of riches to adore;
While every wind an agonizing cry
From liberty bears to her deafened shore.

1896.

THE MELOUNA PASS.

Again, the Asian hordes pour down,
Again the thrilling cry
Rings thro the vale and thro the town:
"Arm, Hellenes, or die!"

At Europe's gate ye fearless stand
Where erst your fathers stood,
To guard your sad devoted land,
To stem the Othman flood.

Ye reck not if the Moslem creed
Give Paradise to all
Who in the cause of Islam bleed,
On field of battle fall.

Nor reck ye if the Christian powers
Draw for your foes the sword;
And plot, while hate their breast devours,
To keep the Turk your lord.

Your fatal passion is the fame
Of that superior time
Which set, thro art and arms, your name
In crown of the sublime.

On Marathon arise the dead,
And in Thermopylae;
And by your side in battle tread—
A spectral company.

But if ye fall beneath the hand
Of numbers, treachery cold,
Your deeds must haunt your glorious land
Like theirs who bled of old.

1897.

THE ABDICATION.

We loved, but parted in the hour
That anger ruled my heart;
Nor deemed that pride possessed the power
To rend our lives apart.

We met again when time had bent
My mind to wisdom's sway;
But absence had in exile sent
Her thoughts of yesterday.

Her lovely eye was calm and clear;
Her hand cold touched mine own;
And as her voice fell on mine ear,
I knew that love had flown.

CONSOLATION.

If, 'neath a load of grief and care,
Upon the road of life you fare,
And quondam friends betray;
Say to your soul depressed and low
With man's unfaith and fortune's blow:
This, too, will pass away.

Against the regiments of change
There is no guard; for ever range
The bandits of decay:
And if your life is hard and sad,
Remember, heart in sorrow clad,
It, soon, will pass away.

A THRALL OF VICE.

In drunken sleep the mother lay,
Her garments torn and vile;
Her coarse and matted hair astray;
While wounds her face defile.

The mother lay in shameful sleep;
A child played by her side,
Sought in her nerveless arms to creep,
And prattled, laughed and cried.

The wind came thro the broken pane;
Sputtered the candle's spark;
The embers sank in ashen rain;
The room grew cold and dark.

The child had ceased its playing now,
And fretful plained for food;
As hunger burned its pulse and brow
In that dread solitude.

The night wore on. The woman slept
A heavy sodden sleep.
The child no longer moaned and wept,
But sank in slumber deep.

The sun stole in. The mother woke
With flamed and aching head;
And stretched her hand, and faintly spoke
To one who now was dead.



MACBETH.

My name no longer conquers, and I feel
Burning the crown from hand of honor won;
In paths accurst my drunken fortunes reel:
I grow to be a-weary of the sun.

The fatal hags have pressed their drops of bane
Upon my hope, and juggled with my soul;
Since Birnam wood now comes to Dunsinane,
And clouds of doubt upon my spirit roll.

For Banquo's children have I called remorse
Into my mind, and made my futile sword
Wealthy with blood drained from my country's corse:
Still followed by lip-service, but abhorred.

Yet do I wear, prophetic voices tell,
An unseen mail that laughs my foes to scorn.
To conquer me they must unpeople hell:
I may not yield to one of woman born.

Time shall confront these terrors with a smile,
Disarming them, or robbing them of power;
So I may walk once more the happy isle
Of peace, and know again a tranquil hour.

Does one the hopeless combat now demand?
Macduff, torn timeless from his mother's breast!
Then in this house of blood invite thy brand,
And be with Duncan dissolution's guest!



ORESTES.

With hand yet dripping with thy mother's blood,
What now unnerves thee? The polluted ground
Opens, that drank the parricidal wound;
And blossoms to thy sight the fatal bud
Of retribution—that grim sisterhood
In black and gory garments, temples bound
With hissing serpents, eyes of flame that round
Volley despair, and pour a scorpion flood
Upon thy soul. Flee thou the spot accurst!
The temple seek of him who lives in light;
Who counseled thee, and can enstar thy night
With rays of hope. Then may these bonds be burst
That chain thy life to horror, and release
Come at the end when time shall whisper—
peace!

THE AONIAN MOUNT.

Time was when streams of song poured down thy
side,
And ravished every ear. Thy barren land
Defied the peasant's uninstructed hand,
But fertile grew when claimed and made the
bride
Of rich imagination. Soul replied
To soul; the mind was raptured by a band
Laureled and ever young, at whose command
The doors of inspiration opened wide.
But now thy founts are dry. The oak, the pine,
Guard silently the haunts of fancy's child;
The snows that crown thy brow are but a shrine
Where desolation by the storm is piled;
Those notes of music that were deemed divine,
Strains of the forest by the wind beguiled.

TO THE CUBAN RECONCENTRADOS.

Driven from home, your fertile fields despoiled,
Your houses wrapped in flames, and the fair scenes
Beloved made desolate, you slowly die
Within the Spanish walls, by Spain's decree.
You may not labor, may not in the sea
Cast hook and line, fell hunger to appease;
Or turn to flee. A meager charity
Relieved, a while, your woe; but, unlike crime,
That spring ran dry. The refuse of the streets,
And animals unclean, were all that war,
And man, allowed your lot within a land
Nature had made the richest on the globe.
Soon in your ranks starvation stepped, and slew
More than the sword. His dank and dismal wing
Flapped on your cheek, and blanched it with despair;
A fire burnt in your eye,—the strange, wild fire

That plays upon the tomb. You raised your face
Up to the stony skies; and never fell
Manna to save, nor lightning to destroy.
Your masters stood, with calm impassive brows,
Hearts fed by human blood, as I am told,
And in religion nursed, to see you sink,
With throes of agony, into the earth.

A few more pangs, and you that yet remain
Will sleep beneath the sod. There, human hate
Can never reach you more. The liberty
For which you vainly sighed in this strange world,
Will be all yours. A guilty throne may still
Stand in its subjects' blood, and coldly slay
The child of freedom in its very birth.
You will be natives of another clime,
And subjects of another king; and may,
With mute lips in the chambers of the grave,
Say to the nations when the avenger comes,
There is no sure foundation set in blood.

January, 1898.

TO THE MAINE.

Not when the genius of the storm had flung
His pall of blackness on the sea and land;
And from its cloudy sheath the lightning's brand
Flashed broad and crimson, while the thunders rung
Majestic anthems, was your requiem sung;
Nor when, in battle, the cannon's hoarse command
Bade all the baleful fires of death be fanned
To furnace brightness, with its stentor tongue.
No, not to you was meted such a fate!
But in a peaceful harbor, when the night
Was counsel to your foes, their treacherous hate
In your destruction gluts its appetite;
No chance to answer in war's fierce debate;
And on your sudden end no glory's light!

February, 1898.

MANILA.

When dawn unloosed the purple robe of night
With rosy fingers, there the Spanish fleet
Its colors waving proud, her glances meet.
With pride disdainful, in its gloomy might,
It saw the western foe prepared to smite,
Ranged on the bay. Descends the fiery sleet;
The forts, with ball and shell, the assailants greet;
Columns of smoke repulse the morning light.
Ere reeled the wearied day thro sunset's gate,
That pride was blasted, that squadron was no more.
Closed over it the sea insatiate,
Those decks commanding, in its muffled roar;
While on the waters, scathless, calm as fate,
The victors rode, resistless as of yore.

May, 1898.

SANTIAGO.

Their fleets destroyed, the Spaniards said:
"Our valiant army will not tread
Ways of defeat. Let it but face
The foe, it cancels this disgrace."
We landed men; we drove them back
Along the rocky roadless track,
Seamed with ravines. We scaled the hill
San Juan, steep, lead-swept, trenched with skill;
And planted, in their fiery hail,
Our flag upon the heights. The vale
Spread at our feet, disclosed the town
On which our guns began to frown
And thunder. In burning shot and shell,
Death in his ghastliest manner fell;
While famine, heading other pests,
Sat like a vampire on their breasts.
It was enough. Their dream of pride
Sank in surrender's hideous tide.

WAR.

I drench the world with bloody rain;
I mow the ranks of human grain
With burning scythe; I harvest men,
Then turn to reap new fields again.

My fires are fed by pride and hate;
My spectral riders penetrate
To countless homes, and drag the brave
Thro tears, into the silent grave.

But man is man; and I have lent,
For life-blood in my service spent,
That diadem of sad renown
With which the nations soldiers crown.

My crimson sea sinks in the earth,
And gives the flowers of glory birth;
While time, my adjutant, will weave
Balm garlands round the hearts that grieve.

THE DEAD WARRIOR.

Upon his bier, beneath the fading skies,
How quietly he lies!
He can not hear his comrades gentle tread
Around his narrow bed;
Nor see the debt of love their glances pay
His cold and senseless clay.
The drum's reveille, and the cannon's roar
Shall waken him no more;
For he, all battles past, is drinking deep
Of the eternal sleep.

In morning of his life, he prompt obeyed
The call his country made;
His spirits soaring high, his heart aflame
To climb the hills of fame;
And brilliantly upon his sea of dreams
Fell glory's mystic gleams,—
The charge, the escalade, the banner torn
Thro storm of bullets borne,
Until at last implanted high it wave
Above the foeman's grave.

Now ended are those dreams; the heart is stilled
That once to glory thrilled;
And all the deeds of prowess he had planned
In airy fields disband:
Death was importunate, and seized his prey
Ere fortune had her day;
But one will lock in dim oblivion's vaults
His noble, generous faults,
And keep, some little time, his virtues green
In memory's sad demesne.

THE LAST LEAF.

The frost has set his seal
In flaming colors on thy brow;
And, one by one, thy comrades steal
Meekly from every bough.

In green I saw them dressed,
Soft rustling in the airs of May;
Yet thou, by cold decay caressed,
More beauty dost display.

Still bend the rain-loved skies
In fading glory o'er thy head;
Thro pallid airs the robin flies,
Altho his voice is dead.

But soon the winds will fall
In fury on thy mother tree;
And thou to earth, at nature's call,
Wilt flutter silently.

NIGHT.

A pilgrim thro the world I go,
Observing tides of passion flow
From human hearts; with salvaged pen
Their flotsam bringing back again.

And oft the presence of the night
Wakes in my soul a sad delight,
Routing the proud command of day
Which kept my better sense at bay.

'Tis then we feel how poor and weak
The prizes are we anxious seek;
How vain is all that time can give
To nature's slaves condemned to live.

Let night be then a solemn sign
Of that condition to be mine,
When, from this net of being freed,
I taste at last Nirvana's mead.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

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